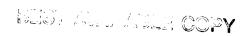We claim:

1.   A method for providing status information from multiple information servers, the method comprising:

      receiving a request for status information from the multiple information servers;

      acquiring status information from each of the multiple information servers; and

      rendering status images related to the status information received from each of the multiple information servers, wherein the rendering of any one of the status images is not affected by any delay in acquiring status information from any one of the other multiple information servers.

2.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

      displaying the rendered status images in a Web page, wherein the rendered status images are displayed as soon as they are individually rendered without regard to whether any one of the other status images are rendered.

3.   The method of claim 1, wherein a temporary status image is provided for status images which are delayed in rendering.

4.   The method of claim 1, wherein receiving a request for status information from the multiple information servers includes receiving login information related to one or more of the multiple information servers.

5.   The method of claim 4, wherein the login information is an electronic mail login name and password.

6.   The method of claim 1, wherein one or more of the multiple information servers is an electronic mail server.

7.   The method of claim 1, wherein acquiring status information from each of the multiple information servers is performed on a periodic basis.

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1   8.   The method of claim 1, wherein the status images may be in any one of the following

2   formats including GIF, JPEG, and MPEG.

1   9.   The method of claim 1, wherein the request for status information identifies a server side

2   CGI script which renders the status images.

1   10.   A method for providing and displaying information received from multiple information

2   provider sources, the method comprising:

3   providing a status indicator for each of the multiple information provider sources which

4   includes:

5   receiving status information from each of the multiple information provider

6   sources; and

7   generating an image for each of the multiple information sources, wherein each

8   respective image contains status information from each of the multiple information

9   sources, wherein each image is generated without regard to whether any one or more of

10   the multiple information sources is delayed in providing status information.

1   11.   The method of claim 10, wherein the status information is determined on an ad hoc basis.

1   12.   The method of claim 10, wherein the status indicator for each of the multiple information

2   provider sources is a GIF image.

1   13.   The method of claim 10, wherein the multiple information provider sources are Web

2   servers.

1   14.   A method for providing a visual representation of information collected from a variety of

2   information sources for display in a single Web page, the method comprising:.

3   receiving a request for information from a plurality of information sources;

4   processing the request for information from the plurality of information sources; and

5   displaying the information from each of the plurality of information sources, wherein the

6   information is displayed in a plurality of status images, each of which represent a single

7   information source.

1   15.   The method of claim 14, wherein the request for information is an HTTP request.

1   16.   The method of claim 14, wherein processing the request for information from the

2   plurality of information sources includes separately accessing each of the plurality of information

3   sources to acquire the requested information from each of the plurality of information sources.

1   17.   The method of claim 14, wherein the status images are one of GIF, JPG, and MPEG

2   image files.

1   18.   The method of claim 14, wherein the status images are updated automatically with new

2   information as provided by each of the plurality of information sources.

1   19.   The method of claim 14, wherein each status image is displayed independently of each of

2   the other status images whereby the display of the Web page is unaffected by a delay in

3   displaying one or more status images.

1   20.   The method of claim 14, wherein processing the request for information from the

2   plurality of information sources includes rendering an individual status image related to a single

3   information source.